

**08/10/14 ..... 19 A**

-- Six years ago, a former college classmate of mine embarked on a new adventure. His youngest child had just graduated from high school. He held a good leadership position with Steven Covey Associates.

-- But he left that position so he and his wife could buy a small RV and hit the road, giving parish missions and retreats. This was something they had been involved in on a part time basis previously.

-- Remember, it was in 2008, with the economy tanking and energy prices beginning to rise significantly. He left his secure life, insurance coverage and good benefits for a life of uncertainty, heading out on rough waters like Peter in our gospel.

-- But he did so in faith, voluntarily downsizing his lifestyle in order to do God's work as he best saw it. So far, it has worked out fairly well, though he and his wife are still making adjustments.

-- Like Peter, my classmate Jerry took a leap of faith. To do so, he had to confront some understandable fears: What if this doesn't work? What if I or my wife gets sick? What if one of my six kids needs my help with her own family?

-- Elijah had to confront fearful things in this first reading. He had run away from the King of Israel, who was seeking to kill him. He'd travelled over 200 miles, but now he was facing earthquakes, storms, fire. How could he remain calm and hear the Lord's voice in all this?

--I would suspect that many of us have at one time or currently are facing fearful things in our lives. Perhaps you have had to go through a job change, or even accept a position with lower pay in order to have full time work and benefits.

-- Perhaps you have an adult child who is facing difficulties in his marriage, or with her children. Perhaps you are facing a possible diagnosis of cancer or a serious disease for yourself, a spouse or a close relative.

-- We all have to face the rough waters of life on occasion. Sometimes, it will be for a brief time. Such was the case last week for some of our friends just east of us who were deprived of drinking water.

-- At other times, the challenge will be more enduring. What does the Lord ask of us in these situations?

-- First of all, we cannot run away from the challenge. If we hide, God will catch up with us, as surely as he did with Adam and Eve and with Elijah. We have to face our fears.

-- Then, we should not venture out as if we can face this on our own, without help. At first, Peter went out on the water with a little too much swagger. We need God's help and as much human support as we can get from those who care for us. We must approach God in humble prayer.

-- Finally, like Peter we will face moments when we feel like we are sinking. None of us has perfect faith. But God will offer us his hand just as he did to Peter. We must have the faith and humility to grab it.

-- Life can often feel like a rough sea, tossing us about here and there. It can be difficult to hear God in the midst of its raging winds. We will often be tempted to move back into our cocoon of safety where no one can bother us.

-- Jesus calls out to us. He invites us on to the sea of life where we encounter our brothers and sisters in need of our support. That sea may seem awfully turbulent.

-- But we are not alone on the sea of life. Jesus is there for us. And he will hold out a hand to rescue us when we are sinking in those waters.